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In Great Love

A Token of

Love and Duty

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To the Memory of
Those Gone on Before.

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On May 3, 1902, at a meeting of the 'Teachers' Literary (composed of teachers of the Public Colored Schools of the District of Columbia), I was requested, by a vote, to participate in the then-talked of public exercises to commemorate the lives of some of our teachers who have gone on before. Having lost my brother since that time I could not take part. I have, therefore, prepared this little token, which I trust will be a source of pleasure to those who receive it. The only pleas offered for its acceptance are its brevity and sincerity. In the language of Montaigne "I have here made only a nosegay of culled flowers, and I have brought nothing of my own but the string that ties them."

HON. JOHN W. ROSS,

LATE COMMISSIONER D. C., IN CHARGE OF SCHOOLS.

MR. LEWIS A. CORNISH,

FORMERLY TRUSTEE OF SCHOOLS.

—————()—————

MISS MARTHA BRIGGS,

SUPERVISOR H. P. MONTGOMERY,

MRS. EMMA V. MONTGOMERY, SEE BROWN.

MISS MARY J. PATTERSON,

MISS LAURA F. BARNEY,

MRS. ALICE STRANGE DAVIS,

MRS. SARAH L. COLVIN, SEE DAFFIN,

MISS ABBY S. SIMMONS,

MR. JOSEPH H. LUCAS.



THE late Honorable John W. Ross was a teacher of the highest type. He taught men by his exalted life. He was born in 1841, graduated from college in 1862, practised law in Illinois, served in the State Legislature, practised law in Washington, was a leading lecturer in the Georgetown University, was for a number of years a Trustee of the Public Schools of the District, was Postmaster of Washington, and finally reached the highest office in the Nation's Capital as President of the Board of Commissioners, serving from 1890 to 1902.

It was during his administration of the Postoffice that the way was made possible, through civil service changes, for many of our High School graduates to enter that Department as clerks. He was kind to the poor as well as to the rich. For many years during his commissionership he had charge of the Public Schools of the District, and he always did what he could for the best interests of the education of the colored race. Having received our diplomas from him on so many of the commencement occasions, it is highly fitting that we offer some testimonial of our esteem for his memory. I had the honor to meet this noble character some years ago when I was appointed to the principalship of the Lovejoy School, at which time I was very much benefitted, instructed and inspired by his words. The impressions he left were those of a frank, kindly and courteous gentleman. His life was an object lesson for the American youth. He was a model as a Commissioner, and I can wish nothing better for our city than that we may never want for men like him.

Born, 1841.
Died, 1902.



Commissioner,
District of
Columbia.

HON. JOHN W. ROSS.



R. Lewis A. Cornish was for ten years a Trustee of our schools, having served under Commissioner Ross, by whom he was repeatedly reappointed. He was born in Washington in 1842, where he died November 12, 1902. For many years he was a clerk in the Interior Department, which position he held up to his death. He was a true representative of his race, knowing them, loving them and sympathizing with them. He loved children and for thirty years was a Superintendent of the Sabbath School in which he labored diligently for their moral and spiritual betterment.

He frequently visited our schools and was untiring in his efforts in their behalf. Not a few of the most important steps taken for their improvement were adopted upon his advice. He asserted and guarded their interests with gentle modesty, but with manly dignity, bowing to no dictation, and influenced only by lofty motives. Despising servility and the "thrif that follows fawning" his highest aim was to do his duty. And to us who knew him long and honored him as a man of ability and integrity, his memory will always be dear.

Born, 1842.
Died, 1902.



Trustee of Public
Schools, D. C., from
1887 to 1897.

MR. LEWIS A. CORNISH.

“Truth is proper and beautiful at all times, and it is never in any case more proper and beautiful than when one is speaking of a great public man whose example is likely to be commended for honor and imitation long after his departure to the solemn shades.”

—Frederick Douglas.

In our corps from
1876 to the time of his
death, 1899.



Supervisor of the
Ninth Division, Public
Schools, D. C.

MR. H. P. MONTGOMERY

“In the elder days of art
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part.”

—Longfellow.

In our corps from
1864 to 1878.
Died, 1902.



Principal and Eighth
Grade Teacher of the
Sumner School

MRS. EMMA V. MONTGOMERY, nee BROWN.

“Great truths are portions of the soul of man
Great souls are portions of eternity.”

—Lowell

In our corps from 1869
to the time of her
death, 1894.



Principal and Instructor of
English Literature,
High School.

MISS MARY J. PATTERSON.

“Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.”

—Milton.

In our corps from 1871
to the time of her
death, 1901.



Instructor of History and
Assistant Principal,
High School.

MISS LAURA F. BARNEY.

“All are architects of fate
Working in these walls of time,
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.”

—Longfellow.

In our corps from
1896 to the time of her
death, 1900.



Teacher
and
Directress of Music.

MRS. ALICE STRANGE DAVIS.

“Be noble ! and the nobleness that lies
In others, sleeping but never dies,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own.”

—Lowell

In our corps from
1870 to 1888.
Died 1895.



Principal and Seventh
Grade Teacher,
subsequently Instructor of
Latin, High School.

MRS SARAH L. COLVIN nee DAFFIN.

**“Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbor and me.”**

—Lowell.

In our corps from 1867
to the time of her
death, 1902.



First Grade Teacher
in the Lincoln
School.

MISS ABBY S. SIMMONS.

“full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

—Gray.



Joseph H. Lucas and Pupils, *Birney School*. A lesson in Nature Study.
Photographed by direction of the Superintendent of Schools for the Paris Exposition, 1900.
In our corps from 1894 to the time of his death, 1902.

**“Tell me not in mournful numbers
Life is but an empty dream.”**

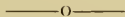
—Longfellow.

TRIBUTE.



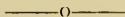
MUCH inspiration may be drawn from the lives of those who have gone on before. In the past there have been many among us whose memory we esteem. As instructors in our schools they made indelible impressions upon our minds. And their examples have furnished the members of our corps abundant encouragement and guidance.

Our schools can never rise higher than the bright ideals and fond hopes of those whose lives have been spent in them. Therefore we can never be above the duty of paying the proper tribute of respect to their memory. As a true lover of virtue delights in contemplating its purest models so we delight in extolling the virtues of those who have been among our best representatives. As a true lover of his country loves her friends and benefactors, so we true lovers of education, consider it not only fitting but a duty to commend and venerate those who have rendered services in our schools.



The name of Miss Martha Briggs will suggest one who was untiring in her devotion to our

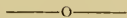
schools. She loved them and labored faithfully in them from 1869 to 1883. Her record as a teacher in the grades, her pre-eminent success as the first Principal of our Normal School and her many acts of love and philanthropy are so closely identified with the early history of our education that it is eminently fitting for us to express here our love and admiration for her. Is there any wonder that the Commissioners of the District should have selected for the designation and adornment of one of our buildings the name of this noble character?



Teaching may be looked upon as presenting a striking analogy to the other leading professions. A man who aspires to be a physician must make the body the subject of long, minute and experimental study. He must learn all the different organs and all their different functions. He must learn all the different laws of the human frame. And it is upon his power to aid and control these laws that his success in healing is considered to depend. A similar conclusion may be drawn as to the teacher. He who practises the teaching art must make the child-mind the subject of long, minute and experimental study. Together with knowing the subjects to be taught he must understand mental philosophy, and must be able to make his teaching harmonize

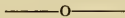
with the laws of mental growth. He must also possess rich moral worth in the community which he serves.

If we ever had in our corps one who measured up to these requirements, who knew the nature of the human mind and understood how to wake up the sleepy intellect; who knew how to inspire teachers with zeal for the tasks before them and with great confidence in himself, it was that genial and gifted educator, Henry P. Montgomery, late Supervising Principal of the Ninth Division of our schools. He was in our corps from 1876 to 1899. When I first entered upon my career as teacher, about twelve years ago, he was one of the first to take me by the hand and welcome me. From that day to the day of his death he was often my advisor and counsellor. He was a true apostle of the gospel of learning, evincing a broad and clear knowledge of all educational questions. No instance can be adduced in which he was actuated by sinister motives; and if he had any one passion stronger than another it was his love for integrity and true merit.



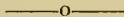
No less deserving of our loving remembrance are the sterling qualities shown in Mrs. Emma

V. Montgomery, nee Brown. She was the first teacher appointed in the Public Colored Schools of Washington, and was for many years Principal of the Sumner Building. During her entire career she was looked upon as a teacher of marked ability. She was also a faithful and affectionate wife. Her door and heart were always open to the teachers and pupils of our schools for whom she had that kind of sympathy which made itself known and felt. She was a woman of strong will and great energy and exhibited all the gifts of a pure and noble nature.



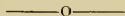
Any reminiscences concerning the teachers of our schools would be incomplete which fails to speak of Miss Mary Jane Patterson, the first colored woman to hold the position of Principal of our High School, and the first also in America to complete the full college course at Oberlin. She will be remembered particularly for having laid the foundations in our schools for the higher culture in literature. This she did while in charge of the English Department in the High School. No greater inspiration could be afforded us as members of this corps; nothing could furnish a more impressive object-lesson of perseverance, industry and culture; nothing could more readily teach our boys and girls how to conquer ignorance by study and to disarm prejudices by calm

reason; nothing could more readily teach them how to "make their lives sublime" than the contemplation of the life of Miss Patterson, who was a model teacher in the highest sense of the word. Having labored in our ranks from 1869 up to the time of her death in 1894, she proved herself to belong to that rare class whose best monument is their life of noble deeds.



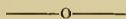
Again we turn to the name of one whose career was a perennial stream of pure influences. If I were asked to point out a life that was especially desirable for others to emulate, for one that was the embodiment of high ideals, always impressing the young with the intrinsic value of upright character, I should answer by pointing to that worthy and exalted name, Laura F. Barney, our late Assistant Principal of the High School. She was an Instructor in our High School from 1872 to 1901. Having charge of the Department of History, her strong point was in awakening deep interest and enthusiasm in that subject. She connected the lives and efforts of her pupils with the various characters presented, in such a way as to always make them see possibilities for brighter futures before them. She lived, not for herself, but for those whom she taught. Those who live for wealth and the things of this world, neg-

lecting the great realities which are eternal in earth and in heaven are following shadows. After life is over all accumulated possessions must pass away, except those only which have been devoted to God and mankind. And I can freely say that we have never had a purer model of this kind of devotion than that exemplified in the life of Miss Laura F. Barney. Her memory will always remain a precious treasure in the hearts of the teachers and pupils of our schools.

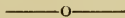


While reviewing the truly brave and useful hearts who have gone on before, let us not forget Mrs. Alice Strange Davis. She was a proficient and successful teacher of music in our schools, being Directress from 1896 till 1900; and her system and methods have laid the basis for us to build up a bright and lasting record in that subject. Her leading aim was to bring out our strong points along the line of music. There was in her work a marvelous blending of innocent fun, earnestness and enthusiasm. When we commemorate her services we but hold up a beacon light of hope for our young people; for while directress of music she proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that we can produce genius and talent in our schools thoroughly capable of directing in educational matters. And when in after years the history of our schools shall be

written her claim to remembrance and distinction will have the fullest and amplest recognition.

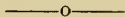


Some years ago there was a teacher in our corps whose character impressed all who knew her. She was Miss Sarah L. Daffin, afterward Mrs. Colvin. She was successively a teacher in the grammar grades, Principal of the Chamberlain Building, and Instructor of Latin in the High School, being with us from 1870 to 1888. She taught me in the same grade as that of which I at present have charge, namely the seventh; and I firmly believe that my education would have ended in the grammar grades had I not been one of her pupils. Her parent-like solicitude has been left as a rich legacy to us all. And as she was so closely identified with the early developments of our schools, having taught in them for so many years, it is quite proper for us to express our love and respect for her memory.



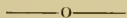
It is a source of great satisfaction that before the end of the career of Miss Abby S. Simmons an opportunity was given us, the beneficiaries of her devotion, to tender her a substantial, fitting and graceful acknowledgment of our esteem. For thirty-five years she accepted social ostracism

and persecution for the sake of helping to educate our boys and girls. As an associate and friend to the teachers and patrons of our schools, as well as in her loving and sympathetic attitude toward the children, her example was unsurpassed. She was always on the still hunt to find some little act of kindness that she might do. No thoughtful person of mature years desires to live forever in this world, and I have no doubt but that this noble woman came within that general rule. She had accomplished a long life of good deeds. Certainly I should regard it as a mercy if the finger of death could be laid upon me the very day my life's work is done, or whenever I become helpless or unable to be of some little service to my fellow man.



There are moments in the experiences of all when we cannot convey to other hearts the emotions of our own. To me such a moment is the present. My feelings are deepened because the obituary has come near to my heart and home. Little did I think last year, at the time of offering the motion in our Literary to set apart a Memorial Day, that my brother who, but a few months ago, stood shoulder to shoulder with me in the ranks, would now be among those who have gone on before and that his name would be added to our memorial list. Although I do

not feel able at this time to prepare an appropriate eulogy, yet, duty inspires me with the courage to contribute one word as a token of my love for his memory. He loved children and nature intensely, and was a faithful and efficient teacher.



All worthy lives teach the lessons of usefulness and virtue, and help to strengthen the purposes of the thousands left on earth. These lives teach us to look up and press on; they constantly invoke us to consecrate our lives to service and duty; whenever we dwell upon them they impel us to renew our vows; they are full of the beautiful lessons expressed in the lines:—

“So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan which moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one that wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

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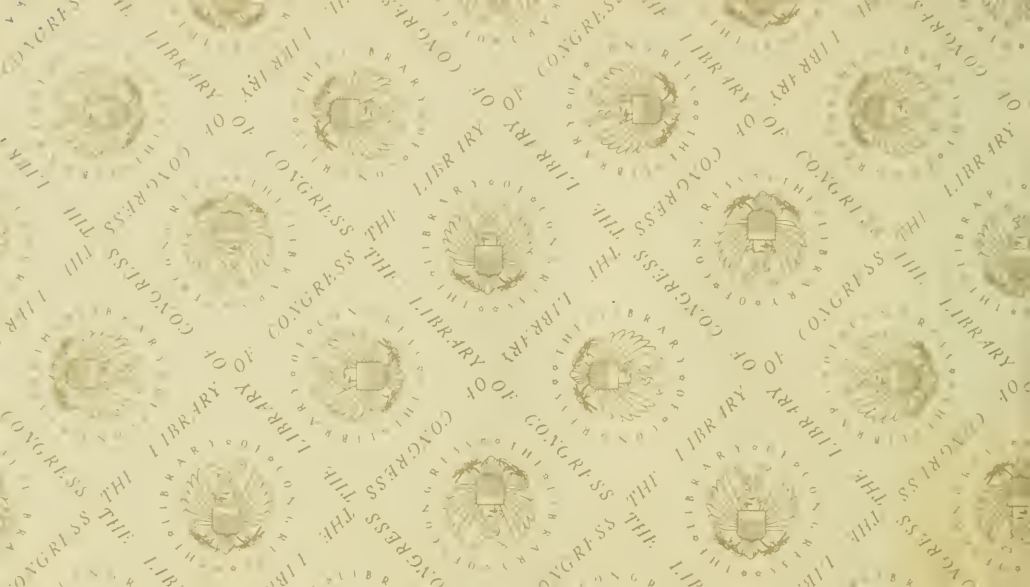
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E.V.L.

"Lest we forget."

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